

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) An apoptosis inducing agent which comprises an isolated protein as being Vpr protein encoded by Vpr gene of HIV-1 wherein 15 amino acid residues from the C-terminal are deleted.

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Currently Amended) The apoptosis inducing agent according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1, which comprises said protein having substantially no ability of arresting a cell in G₂ phase.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented) An isolated apoptosis-inducing gene encoding the protein according to claim 1.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A method for inducing apoptosis of a cell by administering ~~[[a]] an isolated~~ protein as being Vpr protein encoded by Vpr gene of HIV-1 wherein 15 amino acid residues from the C-terminal are deleted.

Claim 6 (Original) A recombinant vector containing the gene according to claim 4.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn) A method for inducing apoptosis of a cell by administering the recombinant vector according to claim 6.

Claims 8 – 11 (Canceled)

Claim 12 (Withdrawn) A method for preventive and/or therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of the protein according to claim 1.

Claim 13 (Withdrawn) A method for preventive and/or therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of the recombinant vector according to claim 6.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended) An isolated apoptosis-inducing gene encoding the protein according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented) An isolated apoptosis-inducing gene encoding the protein according to claim 3.

Claims 16 – 19 (Canceled)

Claim 20 (Withdrawn – Currently Amended) A method for preventive and/or therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of the protein according to ~~claim 2~~ claim 1.

Claim 21 (Withdrawn) A method for preventive and/or therapeutic treatment of a cancer or AIDS, which comprises administering a therapeutically effective amount of the protein according to claim 3.

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Claim 22 (New) A pharmaceutical composition which comprises the apoptosis inducing agent of claim 1.